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SUBJECT: SUDAN AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE - STILL NO CASES
REPORTED

REF: Khartoum 1777

Summary and Comment

¶1. Despite the spread of the avian influenza virus to some African countries, including neighboring Egypt, no cases of avian influenza have been reported in birds or humans in Sudan. The Government of National Unity's (GNU) preparations to date have mainly consisted of the formation of committees, the development of plans, and the discussion of proposed budgets, with little action taken to fund plans to raise awareness and detection capabilities. The lack of funds for plan implementation has prevented the GNU from carrying out meaningful awareness, prevention, and control measures. End summary and comment.

GNU Plans

¶2. As a preventive measure, the GNU has banned the importation of birds and poultry products. In addition, the GNU has developed a plan to raise awareness and prepare for a possible outbreak; however, it has not allocated any funding to support the plan. In October 2005, the GNU formed a national committee headed by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Animal Wealth (MOAW), with representatives from the Ministry of Health (MOH), the private sector, and other institutions participating. A task force prepared a national plan with the objectives of raising awareness, providing correct information about the disease and potential hazards related to it, developing a surveillance system to ensure early detection of the disease, and building the capacity of the local laboratories to be able to diagnose the disease.

¶3. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the lead U.N. agency for the avian influenza control efforts in Sudan. FAO, in collaboration with WHO and the concerned ministries, reviewed the MOAW plan, which has an estimated budget of USD 10,626,000. Although the Ministry of Finance approved the budget the task force submitted, no money was made available for implementation

of the plan.

¶4. The MOH has formed a consultative technical committee to prepare plans for disease control, coordinate with other institutions and organizations, and report on the status of the avian flu in the country. On March 8, the committee held the first of its bi-weekly meetings. A draft plan was presented with a budget to address the surveillance, case management and laboratory requirements. The Directorate of Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology has prepared a booklet that provides basic information about the disease and the preventive methods.

¶5. USAID continues to monitor the situation regularly and will provide periodic updates.

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